

## GIVING BIRTH AT THE ROYAL COLUMBIAN HOSPITAL

You are being provided this information because you will be delivering at the RCH. The information is intended to answer common questions about how you and your family can stay healthy for the remainder of your pregnancy, during labour and delivery and when bringing your baby home.

### **What if I contract COVID-19 while pregnant?**

It remains to be seen how COVID-19 affects pregnant women and their fetuses as it is a NEW virus. The good news is that while the numbers of pregnant women infected with COVID-19 are not large, the data from these cases has consistently demonstrated that pregnant women are NOT at a greater risk of infection nor a greater risk of severe sickness (e.g. need for critical care (ICU) or death) compared to non-pregnant women of the same age.

If you are COVID-19 positive or have COVID-19 symptoms at the time of your delivery extra precautions will be taken at the hospital to keep you and your baby safe along with your partner and your healthcare team.

### **Can I transmit COVID-19 to my unborn baby?**

There has been NO evidence of spread (aka vertical transmission) from mother to baby.

### **What will happen to all of my scheduled appointments because of COVID-19?**

The frequency of in-person antenatal care visits will be spaced out to reduce chance of exposure. Your primary physician will review the plan for your care between now and your due date.

### **What should I do if I start having symptoms?**

Any pregnant woman who develops an influenza-like illness should be evaluated **by phone consult** by their primary care provider.

If you develop symptoms in your **third trimester** you will be tested and receive medical care according to the severity of the your symptoms.

### **Should I be self-isolating even if I don't have symptoms?**

You could consider self-isolation at home 2 weeks before your due date to avoid chance of community exposure and infection with COVID-19.

### **What can I do to stay healthy for the remainder of my pregnancy?**

Remember to follow basic personal protection practices whenever you need to leave your house, whether it's to the grocery store or your doctor's office.

Maintain social distancing (eg, stay 6 feet apart from others).

Wash your hands frequently for 20 seconds with soap and water, use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.

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Practice good cough hygiene (cough into your arm).

At home, clean and sanitize surfaces frequently, especially those that you touch often and those that come in contact with food.

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**What should I expect when I arrive at the hospital?**

On arrival you will be screened two times – first at registration and then again when you arrive to the Labour and Delivery ward.

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**Can I still bring my partner or labour support person to the hospital?**

Only one support person from the same household who is in good health (and not on home isolation) is allowed.

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**Can I still bring my own pillow and home gear to the hospital?**

At this time for the safety of all patients, family members and healthcare workers we are asking all patients not to bring any home gear to the hospital. A small bag with personal hygiene items and a water bottle is fine.

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**If both my partner and I go to the hospital, who should care of my children during delivery?**

Child care should be arranged for your other children as they will not be permitted in the hospital during labour and delivery nor to visit post-partum.

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**Will all the nurses and doctors at the hospital be wearing masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE)?**

Your health care providers will be wearing a variety of masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) during your visit. Increased measures are taken for patients who are COVID-19+ or exhibiting symptoms.

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**If I am COVID-19 positive at my due date, will my delivery plan change?**

If you have tested positive, monitoring of you and your baby will be increased in labour: this includes bloodwork, continuous fetal heart rate monitoring, and regular mom vitals. Additionally, we suggest either **using an epidural** or having an **epidural sited**. Specific to COVID-19+, we suggest this because:

- An epidural can reduce the pain of labour therefore reducing the work of breathing to **prevent shortness of breath**
- If a caesarean section is required, having an epidural greatly reduces the risk of needing to be put to sleep (General Anesthetic/ “GA”)

Delayed cord clamping, skin-to-skin, breastfeeding and babies rooming in with mom are OK as long as precautions are taken.

**If you have any questions, call your primary maternity care provider.**